

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

EDITED BY JOHN R. RICE

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BURDENS AS BLESSINGS

BY REV. NORMAN B. HARRISON, D.D.
Minneapolis, Minn.

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
— I Peter 5:7.

In the economy of God there is a divine alchemy which is able to take constituent elements of life that seem wholly adverse to us and cause them to combine and conspire to our highest good. Happy is the child of God who with Paul knows that this is true and senses the fact, altogether apart from appearances or his ability to reason or straighten out things, that this covers all conditions of life. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

But more! Not only can God do this, He does do it, and that out of a depth of design entirely beyond our ken. His purpose and power are infused into the process, till our circumstances become as seed vitalized by His Spirit out of which springs the fruit He most prizes. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:5, 6, 11).

But that is not all! There is a higher end still. His highest purpose emerges, not in the development of our characters, though He prizes these so highly as to permit us often to suffer even in the refiner's fire, but in the heightening of our relationship to Himself. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psa. 55:22).

1. Scripture has three chief directions for dealing with burdens.

(1) "Every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:5); (2) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2); (3) "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psa. 55:22). At first sight these seem conflicting and confusing, but not so when we analyze them. They relate our burdens respectively to: (1) Self; (2) others; (3) God. Thus they are not conflicting but complementary, comprehending the whole round of duty to: (1) Ourselves; (2) our neighbor; (3) our God. There is no duty outside of these three relationships.

The key to the teaching is in the different meaning attached to the word "burden." In the original, three different words are used (same order as above):

1. Our "portion." The Greek *phortion* is our English "portion." It means the burden normal to life. It is the responsibility attaching to personality which none can escape.

This is a burden we cannot shift to others. To do so is to shirk responsibility and be less than God and men expect of us as citizen

in the State, parent or child in the family, student in school, workman in the world of toil and production.

Yet, while recognizing that our portion in life is a burden inalienable to each one of us, even here our Saviour's help is lovingly extended to us. In the most gracious of invitations He makes use of this very word *phortion*: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

2. Others' "weights." The second scripture contains another Greek word meaning "weight." The context shows that the weaknesses of others are in mind. These weaknesses, with their resulting failures, are burdens that call for our sympathy and help, not for our condemnation. Most sympathetically should one brother who is

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A Happy New Year

FRANCIS RIDLEY HAVERGAL

New mercies, new blessings, new light on thy way;
New courage, new hope, and new strength for each day;
New notes of thanksgiving, new chords of delight,
New praise in the morning, new songs in the night;
New wine in thy chalice, new altars to raise,
New fruits for thy Master, new garments for praise;
New gifts from his treasures, new smiles from his face,
New streams from the fountain of infinite grace;
New stars for thy crown, and new tokens of love,
New gleams of the glory that waits thee above;
New light of his countenance, full and unpriced,
All this be the joy of thy new life in Christ.

REST FOR THE WEARY

BY REV. W. W. SHANNON

(Preached on Radio WJJD, Chicago, July 31, 1940. Stenographically Reported.)

I want to call your attention to one of the most wonderful verses of Scripture. It is found in Matthew the 11th chapter and the 28th verse:

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

You readily recognize these as the words of Jesus. Oh, what the world would give today for rest. Was there ever a time of so much world unrest as now? Empires are falling, forms of government changing over night. Civilization is crashing, and it looks like world-wide chaos. The world is indeed as Isaiah said it would be, staggering to and fro like a drunken man. We fought the world war a few years ago to end war, but the dogs of war are more fierce and bloody now than ever before, let loose to destroy the world. We fought a war to make

the world safe for democracy and now in Europe democracy is only a memory, and in our own country it is so badly mutilated you can hardly recognize it. Why all this unrest? There is just one cause. "Peace on earth, good will toward men"—nineteen hundred years ago peace was offered in Jesus Christ, but this old world did not want peace. It rejected peace, it crucified the Prince of Peace. So the world has war and the world has Hell, and it never will have rest until the Prince of Peace returns and reigns over all nations of the earth.

Look at the unrest in the religious realm. Look at the strife in the church. While the church fights on, the fight between modernism and fundamentalism, the world rushes on to Hell. I hate apostasy. I hate unbelief and camouflage. But I cannot help but feel a cold, lifeless, powerless, fruitless fundamentalism is a great enemy to the cause of Jesus Christ and a great hindrance to the world. If ever we need fundamentalists like Elijah, we need them now. When Elijah met an enemy, he didn't simply argue. He just showed them what God could do, and that is the great need right now of fundamentalism. The world does not need a display of our knowledge of the Gospel nearly so much as it needs a demonstration of the power of the Gospel to save sinners.

Then of course we have in our church the compromisers. They would like to get together but there is no such thing as an agreement between Heaven and Hell. There never can be any compromise. What the church needs is to do away with apostasy and unbelief and worldliness and sin and get back to the Christ of Calvary and stand on the solid rock of Christ's deity and then it can march on, conquering and to conquer.

Look at the unrest in the social world. The social leaders are firing at random trying to hit a target—something that will satisfy the masses. The theaters frequently put on programs to appeal to the base, the sensual, the obscene in an effort to hold the crowds. They ridicule the Gospel, tell us it is antiquated and outgrown but I say to you that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is still the greatest drawing power in the world. Jesus not only saves but satisfies.

Put the most famous actor in the world today—put him or her on for two weeks or a month, and the crowds will peter out. But we have had Jesus Christ for two thousand years and He still holds the crowds. There is no other power on this earth that can put on the same program every day and hold the crowds like the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yes, you can go to the pleasure resorts and the theaters—multitudes of people do. What are they seeking? God pity them. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest," says Isaiah 57:20. The world can never give rest. You may go to the wine cup but you can't drown sorrow. You can go to the dance, the theater, to the pleasure resorts, but they can never satisfy. Many people today seek after gold, money,

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SINS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

BY EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

(Preached Sunday morning, October 13, 1940, in Claim Street Baptist Church, Aurora, Illinois.)

Now this morning I am speaking on Sins Against the Holy Spirit—not one sin, but several sins. The Holy Spirit is a person. The Holy Spirit is not just some undefinable, indefinite influence, the Holy Spirit is a person. I mean He can be offended, and He can be pleased. He loves us, He helps us pray. He teaches us the Bible. He watches over our footsteps. He seeks sinners and woos them and longs for them. The Holy Spirit is a person. The Holy Spirit is God in Spirit form who is among us and in the bodies of Christians and is pleading with unsaved people. The Holy Spirit is a person, a person that dwells with us and to whom we must give account, a person we can sin against as definitely as you can sin against your neighbor or your wife or your child. You may sin against the Holy Spirit.

There are four or five sins depending on whether you count two of them as the same one, that the Bible specially mentions as sins against the Holy Spirit.

Two of these sins that are mentioned are sins that Christian people commit, and two, or three, of them are sins that unsaved people commit. Now all sins are against God, but against this blessed person of the Spirit of God, there are these five sins that people commit. I want you to be prayerful that you will let God show you the terrible sins we commit against the Holy Spirit, and that you seek to please Him from this time forth, conscious, continually conscious of His presence and not committing these horrible sins.

1. Christians By Sin Grieve the Holy Spirit.

First I will talk to you about the sins of Christians.

There are two sins I will mention that saved people commit against the Holy Spirit. The first of them is mentioned in Ephesians 4:30. I will begin with verse 29:

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good

to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Then the fifth chapter continues: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints:

"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."

And in the very heart of this passage in Ephesians, chapters four and five about Godly living, in the very heart of this passage is, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." A Christian has the Holy Spirit living in his body. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you. Some people sometimes pray, "Holy Spirit, come and dwell with us." You need not pray that prayer any more. If you are saved, He does dwell with you, and not only with you, but He dwells in you. Your body is His temple. Just as if this building were piled full of garbage and trash and filth and we come here to worship, we would be offended and grieved at that. The Holy Spirit can be grieved and is grieved about sins in the body and life of the child of God where He lives. It is His own body, His own tem-



ple, His habitation. He dwells within your body.

Now when you trust the Saviour and He comes in and saves you, really He comes in through the person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ has a human body with hands and feet and flesh and bones and in that physical sense He is in Heaven. Jesus Christ has scars in His hands and in His feet and a wound in His side, and Jesus Christ is now literally, bodily, physically beside the Father in Heaven in the Father's throne. Jesus Christ is coming physically back to this earth, and every eye shall see Him, and people will see the wounds in His hands and will say, "Where did you get these wounds?" Jesus has a physical body. When Jesus comes into the heart of a Christian, He comes through His Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is your evidence that you are saved. Everybody who is saved, you have the Word of God for it, and then we have God in us for it also. The seal of our redemption is that the Spirit of God dwells in us. Paul puts it this way: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ is in us now, Christ is in us through His Spirit.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

We say, "Glorify God in your heart." We say, "Glorify God in your spirit," but God doesn't begin there. Concerning the Holy Spirit, a Christian's attitude is to begin with the body. The body, not the heart, is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Your hands are His hands. Your feet are His feet. Your voice is His voice. He lives within you and ought to rule you.

Now, then, don't grieve that dear Holy Spirit, the Scripture says, by sins against the Spirit of God. Certain things that grieve Him are mentioned, filthy communication, wrath, clamour, evil speaking, foolish talking, jesting and all such things as are marks of the old

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Sins Against the Holy Spirit

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

man, the marks of the old carnal man, the marks of an unsaved man and the marks of a Christian who still lives like the unsaved man, for Christians have still the old nature, and if they do not yield to the Holy Spirit they live like the unsaved man lives. Don't grieve the Spirit of God.

I want you to notice that the principal thing said about grieving the Spirit has to do with the tongue. We can talk for God, and ought to. One of the marks of the Spirit's filling, talking for God, is mentioned the first thing in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: AND YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME..." The Holy Spirit, when He has His way with Christians always leads us to witness for Jesus. If you are right with God and filled with the Spirit, you are bound to talk for Jesus and win souls. Then to have that vessel, the tongue, which should be used for winning souls, to use that in wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking and filthy communication and jesting, the Scripture says, is an awful sin, and the Holy Spirit grieves and pines and His heart is burdened. The Holy Spirit, that dear Person Who lives in the body of a Christian is so grieved by the wrong use of the tongue.

Over in James the Scripture says, "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh" (James 3:10-12). He said, "My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

If there is anybody here who says, "Well, Brother Rice, I don't mean a bit of harm. I say things I oughtn't to say, and I am sorry right away, and I don't do it any more for awhile. It is over in just a moment. One woman said to Billy Sunday, 'I lose my temper and say some awfully hard things, but I am sorry as soon as I say it, and it doesn't last but just a second.'"

He said, "Yes, when a double-barrelled shot gun goes off, it doesn't last but just a second, but it may kill a lot of people while it lasts."

This horrible sin of the tongue, out from under control, turned over to worldly ways of talk, whether only by idle language or foolish talking or jesting or whether it be wrath and clamour and evil speaking and corrupt communication, it is a horrible sin against the Spirit of God Who wants to have His way in your life. Do you grieve the Holy Spirit in your life?

In the same passage of Scripture in Ephesians is this: "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28). "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (vs. 22), and live a new life, the Scripture says.

Do you see that the Spirit is grieved when you sin in your heart? Suppose I am invited to your home and in the bedroom where you put me, I find dirty sheets and soiled towels and a spittoon half full, and tobacco smoke everywhere and cigarette ashes and butts on the table. I might love you, but I would be grieved in my soul. I have sat down to many a table with oil cloth on it, and a table in the kitchen, and eaten with steel knives and forks, and with sometimes a tin plate, and I

have had ordinary home cured bacon and corn bread and sorghum molasses and enjoyed it, but if I came to your home and when I sat down to the table every room was full of flies and even the dishes dirty and there was evidence of filth and a love of filth or an indifference to filth, my heart would be grieved within me. It isn't your poverty that would grieve me, and God can use vessels of clay, and it wouldn't be the simplicity of service; that wouldn't be the thing, and it wouldn't be the meagerness of the fare, but what would grieve me would be the standards that are not right for Christian people, that filthy, dirty house, and I would be grieved in my soul. If your pastor said, "We will furnish you this home while you are here. These people wanted to entertain you," I would say, "If you don't mind, I will go back and forth and live over with Mrs. Rice at Wheaton while I am here in this revival."

You remember the Spirit of God lives in your body and how He is grieved with all the sins you commit.

I have heard preachers who mean well sometimes say, "If you go to a picture show, the Holy Spirit will not go with you," or, "You cannot go into a tavern and have the Holy Spirit with you. He would not go into such a place." Sometimes I almost wish that were true, but it is not true. If you are a child of God and you go into a tavern, the Holy Spirit goes with you. He grieves, and grieves, and grieves, and mourning fills the heart of God when the Holy Spirit must witness sin. He is in your body and must live in your body, and will, or you are not saved, and always will or you have never been born again. The Holy Spirit goes where you go, listens to what you listen to, and sees what you see and has companionship with those you companion with, but He grieves and withdraws Himself and doesn't reveal Himself and doesn't speak to your heart. He is grieved, and hides more and more until He withdraws into the inner circle and doesn't manifest Himself. But He is in your body, and He is grieved by where you go and what you say and what you do when it is wrong.

Some people say, "If you go on and smoke cigarettes, the Holy Spirit won't be with you." I am sorry to say, the Holy Spirit of God smells the odor that comes into your lungs and is grieved by the blight on your muscles and nerves and brain. The sweet Holy Spirit is grieved by the stink of the unholiness and filth of it, as He lives in you. He is grieved by your sins. Therefore the Scripture said, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

That is one reason why every man should say, "Oh, this body of mine belongs to God, and I dare not, I dare not grieve Him, the Spirit. That is the reason these dear girls I heard singing this morning should say, 'God help me never to sing a line but what the Spirit of God can rejoice in.' I hope you will say that."

In the Christian the Holy Spirit abides. He is the evidence, the constant seal and proof that we are saved. When you sin, He must suffer in your sin and be grieved.

Suppose a Christian woman makes a sad mistake and marries an unsaved man. Later on his drinking and blasphemy against God, his habits that are filthy and mind that is polluted, will cause such a woman to grieve her heart out year in and year out. A woman said to me one time, about her wicked husband, "I am true to my husband. I love my husband, but the truth of the matter is, it is an unceasing nightmare to me, and my heart cries out, 'How long, oh, Lord, how long?' until it will be death or some other way that I will be relieved from this terrible bondage." So a Christian's sin causes the Holy Spirit to grieve every day in his heart. How do you think the Spirit of God feels within the Christian when the Christian goes on in worldliness and worldly talk and drinking and gambling or dancing or keeping company with bad companions? Oh, I beg you, "Grieve not the Spirit of God."

II. Christians By Rebellion or Disobedience Quench the Spirit.

And the next sin of Christians toward the Holy Spirit is given in First Thessalonians 5:19. It has no context. I mean the verse before it isn't talking about the same thing, and the verse after it isn't talking about the same thing. It stands alone, simple and plain, that verse of four words: "Quench not the Spirit" (I Thess. 5:19). "Quench not the Spirit." The Lord says, "Don't pour cold water on all the plans of the Holy Spirit." This is a different kind of sin against the Holy Spirit.

It is one kind of sin to smoke cigarettes and grieve the Spirit and say hot, sharp words or keep bad companions and so grieve the Holy Spirit. That is one kind of sin. But when the Holy Spirit of God says, "God sent Me to tell you what to do, to guide you into all truth; Go to that man and tell him what I bid you," or, "You accept and teach this Sunday School class," or when the Holy Spirit of God gives other instructions, and you refuse, that is a different kind of a sin.

I wonder how many men here whom God has tried to get to preach, but in your heart you were not willing. You said, "I can't do it! Preachers are almost always poor." Or you say, "I am ignorant, I don't have any schooling, I am not talented. I don't have a gift," and so on. If so, you quenched the Holy Spirit.

Your sin may have been the sin of rebellion about anything else the Holy Spirit led you to do.

When God talked to Moses, Moses said, "I can't talk," and finally the Scripture says God was angry with Moses because of his resisting the call of the Spirit of God.

I wonder, do you quench the Holy Spirit like this?

When I was a boy in college, we had a way of playing pranks of many kinds. A favorite was this. A fellow in an upstairs window would call downstairs, "Listen, Jim!" and then when Jim put his head out the window below, he would pour a bucket of cold water on him. That was thought to be a great joke. Or sometimes we would fill a paper sack with water and hold it ready and then turn it loose, and it would hit on the fellow's head like a ton of brick, but it wouldn't kill him. It would only splatter all over him.

Another way we had. Some boys in the dormitory were always gadding about from room to room and people couldn't get much studying done, so we would just leave the door partly ajar for this chap and when he would come bursting in where we were trying to study, we would have a bucket of water sitting on top of the door carefully balanced when he pushed the door open the bucket would be upset on him and the water pour all over him. That may do for a college prank, but I tell you now that is a wicked, horrible way to treat the Spirit of God. Do you always pour cold water on the Holy Spirit's plan for you? Does the Holy Spirit say, "I want you to do so and so," and you quench the Spirit? Are you always pouring cold water of discouragement and disobedience and rebellion and alibis and excuses when the Spirit of God leads you to do something? I wonder how many times the Spirit of God has said, "Talk to that man," or "do this" or that, and you say, "I can't do that. I wouldn't know what to say, nobody would listen to me." Have you done that way?

When I was a boy on a stock farm in West Texas, I had two colts. One was a sorrel pony, less than two years old, that I broke. I called him Dick. He was long-legged, high-headed, and showed the whites of his wild eyes. It took me about a year to get him broken, and it was a good thing I began in time. After I had had that colt a number of years, I finally sold him. The man came to get him while I was gone, and he had to rope him to catch him, and when he saddled him up, he bucked all over the place with this fellow. That is how stubborn and wild he was. I could bridle him if I watched him, and I could make him do things if he knew I had the upper hand. But I would put a saddle on his back, and he would buck it off before I could get it buckled on. More than once I got a good rawhide buggy whip and cornered that horse and when he kicked and fought I had to whip

him until, trembling, snorting, he would turn around, and I would catch the bridle and lead him back again to where he pitched the saddle off and make him stand there, and keep one hand on the rein and threaten what I would do to him if he didn't stand still, and then throw the saddle on his back. He would sway away down and snort, but I would make him stand there until I could get it buckled on. Everything he did I had to make him do it. That wasn't really much pleasure.

One day I tried to walk home with a girl from church, leading that horse. I could almost say I dragged him instead of leading him. He stretched his long neck out as far as he could, and his feet were like lead. I pulled and tugged, and took off my coat and tied it on the saddle, and sweated, dragging that horse and trying to talk to a girl! You can't have any fun that way. I resolved then that never again would I try to lead that horse and walk home with anybody.

But I had another colt. When I was fifteen years old my father gave him to me. My father said, "When my girls are fifteen, I will give each of them a heifer calf. And when my boys are fifteen, I will give a colt." I always thought I had a big advantage because I got that horse, and sister didn't have a horse. Only, when sister got ready to marry, she had a whole herd of cattle and I still had my pony! My dad was pretty sharp, wasn't he? But my father gave me a fine, high-stepping pony of thoroughbred stock. That colt had what is called a blind tooth. I took special care of him, called him King. I knocked out that tooth with a chisel. I would carry sugar in my pocket when I would go out to feed him, and he would muzzle through all my pockets to find biscuits. If I would let him out he would come up to the house and stick his head in the kitchen door. He got large enough after a while to ride. I put a saddle on him and got on him, and he didn't buck. I remember Dick, that sorrel pony, had bucked every time I had ridden him for some time. But this other pony, King, was awkward, and ignorant, and I had to get him "bride-wise," and I had to teach him the gaits but there was never a time when he didn't want to please me. If I went anywhere, I didn't have to drag him. I could just put my hand on his mane, and all I had to watch out for was that he didn't step on my heels. He would go anywhere I said. I could get on him and put my hand on his mane, guiding him. I didn't need a bridle. He was anxious to please.

I wonder how many of you are here who, when God wants you to do anything, He has to drag you into it and whip you into it and beat you into it? After a while He will say, "All right, I will get somebody else that I don't have to whip all the time." How many have done something when you had to be beaten into it?

You started out to tithe, but you broke your vows, until trouble came. Then you confessed, "I have sinned, I will start again." Some have done no personal soul winning work. You hoped to do it some of these days, and God keeps calling you, but you never go. God says, "I am tired of monkeying around with that kind of a Christian. I will get somebody that won't always be pouring cold water on all of my plans."

I was in a revival at Alexander, Texas, and a young married woman came to me. She said, "I am afraid I am not saved."

"Why not?" I asked.

"I don't feel like I am saved. I am not a Christian."

Her father-in-law said, "Bessie is the best Christian I know. I know Bessie is saved."

Her husband said, "That is foolishness. She is a Christian. I know. I have lived with her long enough to know. She loves the Lord."

But this young woman said to me, "I don't believe I am saved. I can't get in touch with God. He pays no attention to me when I pray. I am miserable and sad, and I don't believe I am saved."

The revival went on, and in a large service one morning under the trees I gave an invitation. I had preached on, "What Sin Will Do For a Christian," and I told how it would take a Christian's

joy and assurance and power. I gave an invitation to sinners and I went back to talk to a woman in a red dress (It is funny I remember about the red dress). After a while she was saved happily. From the front I heard someone praise the Lord aloud and shouted and praised God. I didn't pay any attention, I went ahead and won this lady and she came down to the front to claim Christ. And there was Mrs. Bessie Wadlington. Her hat was all askew on one side and her hair down, but her face was shining. She didn't care where her hat was. She was as happy as could be.

She said, "Brother Rice, I am saved. I was saved all the time! I know now what was the matter. We moved from a country community to this little town. (People are mighty hoity-toity in small towns sometimes, you know.) The Lord said to me, 'Go ahead and win souls like you did before. Go talk to that man.' And I said, 'Lord, you know I am nothing but a country woman, and people will laugh at me. I won't know what to say here in town. I am an ignorant woman. Everybody will make fun of me.' And the next time the Holy Spirit came to me and said, 'Go to this boy here,' and I didn't do it, and after a while the Holy Spirit quit speaking to me at all. He tried to get me to go and I wouldn't do it, so He just said, 'Go your way then, you won't listen to any plan I have. You won't do anything I tell you. All right, go your own way,' and I got to where I never felt His moving, I never heard His call. He didn't give me any instructions, He didn't give me any evidence I was saved. I lost all the joy I had, and I decided I was lost."

What she did was that she quenched the Spirit by rebellion against His will. Don't quench the Spirit!

There are two positive commands. I can't speak of them in detail. The first is, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18), and the other is, "Walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16-25). After you are saved, be filled with the Spirit. Make up your mind, "I am getting everything out of my life that grieves the Holy Spirit, then I will listen to everything He says, and by His grace do it so as not to quench the Spirit."

I was in a revival at Wellington, Texas, and on Saturday afternoon I drove thirty miles over to Shamrock where I was pastor of the First Baptist Church. I drove hard to get over there and get out my paper and make plans, get someone ready to fill the pulpit on Sunday, and drive back and preach Saturday night at Wellington. As I drove, I passed a farm wagon on the road. A man sat on the spring seat, bowed down low. His elbows were down on his knees, and the team plodded along that sandy road. I went around them. Beside him sat a fifteen-year old girl, and on two chairs in the back there sat a boy who I think was twelve and a girl of ten. I passed them by. I had just been speaking five nights on soul winning, and I had promised the Lord, "From this time on I will go anywhere You say and stop anybody anywhere if You say so. I will talk with them. The Holy Spirit can have His way with me about this business. I will do what He says from this time on." The Holy Spirit said, "Talk to that man." And I said — I didn't at first think about God being in it — "I can't stop now. I am speaking in a revival service tonight, and I am about the Lord's business. I must hurry on over and get out my paper and have some one supply the pulpit and get back here and speak tonight. I can't stop." But the Lord said, "But you promised. You said the next time I led you, you would stop anywhere and talk to anybody."

"But, Lord, You know I haven't got time now, I might miss the service tonight."

"All right, go ahead then, but remember you lied to me. You said you would do it!"

And I said, "Lord, I will."

I had gone three-quarters of a mile too far by this time, but I turned the car around and came back and waited until the wagon came along. I stepped out onto the road and stopped him and said, "Friend, I felt impressed to stop and talk to you. My name is John R. Rice. I am a preacher in revival services at Wellington. I

(CONTINUED ON PAGE THREE)

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

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EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

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Sins Against the Holy Spirit

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO)

wanted to ask are you a Christian?"

"No, no," he said, as he looked at me. "My wife is, though. My wife is a fine Christian. She is the best woman I ever saw. She is in the hospital now and we have all been over to see her." He said, "I tell you, I don't know what we will do if my wife dies. We have only been here four months from Alabama, and nobody knows us. My wife is a good Christian. If my wife dies, I don't know what we will do. There won't be anybody to pray for us then, there won't be anybody to make our home worth living in then. She is a Baptist." His lips trembled.

"The Lord told me to stop and talk to you about your soul," I said. "Would you like to be saved and have this whole thing settled?"

"I have certainly been thinking about that since I have been thinking I may lose my wife. Of course I know I am a sinner."

I talked to that whole family, the father, the fifteen year old girl and the twelve year old boy and the ten year old girl, and surely they were hungry-hearted. I said, "Will you pray as I pray, and ask God to forgive your sins and save you?" The father said, "Yes, I will," and so did the others. With one foot on the hub of that wagon wheel and the sun beating down, and as the sweaty team switched the flies away, that man trusted Christ, and the fifteen year old girl and the twelve year old boy and the ten year old girl! We had a solemn, tearful time of hand shaking and joy.

"Now I go back to the hospital tomorrow and I will tell my wife I have trusted Jesus Christ and her Saviour is my Saviour. I'll tell her to get well and come home and have a Christian home."

I got in my car and went on my way. I promised God, "I will try never to grieve You, never fight You, never quench You any more, Holy Spirit, when You tell me what to say and where to go. I am going to say what the Holy Spirit leads and follow His leading and quit offering alibis and rebellion and insulting excuses. When the Holy Spirit of God leads me to do something for Him, I am going to do it." I have not always kept my promise, but I mean to, by His grace.

You say, "It won't do any good." That is His business, not yours. Do what He said. Follow His plain leading, the leading of the Spirit.

III. Lost Sinners "Resist the Holy Ghost."

Let's go then to the sins of an unsaved man. And what are these sins that a lost man commits? First, we read over in Acts the seventh chapter. Stephen is preaching to the people that stoned him a little later in the same chapter, and he said to these Jews:

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, as your fathers did, so do ye, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:51, 52).

"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost" — this is the sin of lost people. Stephen said, "You know Jesus came and preached to you and showed signs and wonders and miracles, and God sent prophets to your fathers and they killed them. Like your fathers did, so do ye. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost."

Let me tell you, everybody here today who isn't a born-again Christian, who doesn't know you are saved, I know what is the matter with you. You prattle about doing right and that you are following what light you have, and that you are trying hard to do right — know better than that. One reason is that in your wicked heart you fight off the Spirit of God and resist the Spirit of God like other unsaved people have done through the years. You push Him away and bar the door and you will not listen. You shake your head at me, but, my friend, it isn't I you are driving away — it is the Holy Spirit. I didn't die for you. I am not God's last chance

to win sinners. The Holy Spirit of God comes and whispers to your heart. I beg you today, if anybody here hopes to be saved, and wants to do right, there is one thing to do: say, by God's grace here and now, say, "I want the Spirit of God to come into my heart. I want to get forgiveness and the salvation of my soul today." You can get it. But if you say, "I won't listen to Him. If the Spirit speaks to me, I won't listen to Him, I won't hear Him if He tells me how to repent, shows me how to trust the Saviour, I won't do it!" Then you are resisting the Holy Spirit and cannot be saved.

Oh, the Lord says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with men."

You had better never put up a fight with the Spirit of God. You had better never put up a fight. One day the fight will be over and you will have won, and that would be the most ghastly thing that could ever happen to you. One of these days when the fight is over and the Spirit has left you, the Spirit one day will be discouraged and be insulted and will go away broken hearted and you will never be saved if you don't beware. Do not resist the Spirit of God. Oh, don't resist the Spirit of God. If when we sing a song here there is a quiet moving of the Spirit of God, you had better say, "God is calling me." If somebody talks to you and there is a strange twitching in your throat and a trembling of the lips and tears well up in your eyes, and you are ashamed and embarrassed about it, and there is something you don't quite know what, that is the Spirit of God calling. I beg you, in Jesus' name, yield your whole heart to Him today and let Him guide you and lead you right into the presence of Jesus Christ Who will take away your sins and come and make you a child of God. Yield to the Spirit today. Don't resist Him.

I have seen the way sinners go on and resist the Spirit. Listen, one day you will die and go to Hell because you didn't yield to the sweet pleading of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Some Sinners Insult the Holy Spirit Who Would Lead Them To Christ.

Another sin against the Holy Spirit is discussed in Hebrews the 10th chapter and verse 29. I will read verses 26 to 29:

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

"But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

"And hath done despite" — that is the word for *insult*. You can not only resist the Holy Spirit, but finally come to the point where you will insult Him, and where you will despise Him, and where you will tread Him under foot, and where you will spit in His face. Now I wonder how many of you have insulted the Holy Spirit. Some of you I have talked to you and you have not only resisted, but anger in your heart flared up against the sweet call of God. Satan may have gotten you to where you despised it, perhaps pushed away the Holy Spirit, where you did not even come back to the services of God. Oh, I beg you, do not insult the Holy Spirit. Do not insult Him! Do not insult the Spirit of God Who comes to urge you to be saved.

I tell you if there is anybody here who feels any conviction in your soul, any feeling that you need God, I beg you now, be careful, you can offend that One who is dealing with you. He is one of the most tender of all the beings in the world. He is the only person of the Godhead who can be so grieved that He will never, never come again. God the Father — you can't commit a sin against the Father that can't be forgiven, be-

cause God has agents; He has the Bible, He has preachers and Christians. He has the Holy Spirit. You can't say anything against Jesus so bad but what you can be forgiven. You may curse and swear and call Him every wicked name, and still be saved if you will repent and trust Him. But if you drive away the Spirit of God, you have committed the horrible unpardonable sin, that sin against the Holy Spirit.

V. Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit; the Unpardonable Sin.

Don't resist Him. And then second, unsaved man, don't insult Him, and last of all, don't blaspheme Him or drive Him forever away.

I read in Matthew the 12th chapter just a brief word here about that: Matthew, chapter 12, verses 31 and 32:

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

God has a word here that you had better bear in mind. Here is a sin that has no forgiveness. It isn't against me. You can hate me. You might kill preachers and still be saved. It isn't cursing — you might curse and blaspheme God and still be saved. It isn't murder — murderers can be saved. It isn't adultery, adulterers are saved, many times. This sin is a certain sin of the heart that is against the Holy Spirit. It is always about the same matter. It is what you do to the Holy Spirit as He tries to get you saved. It isn't what you say about Him outwardly, it is what you say and do against Him in your heart. It isn't a word of the mouth. This same Scripture said, "Jesus knowing their thoughts said unto them..." and then He gave this passage.

This is a sin no Christian can commit. In the wicked heart of a lost sinner there rises up rebellion and he fights God and cries, "I will not hear You. I will not listen to You. Get away from my heart's door!" And he may so insult and so grieve Him that He will never come again to your heart's door, and you can never be saved.

I know — well I know — that after all I am incidental more or less in God's plan of winning sinners. I mean by that, God has another agent, I am not your last chance; you could hate me and stone preachers and kill them like they stoned others in Bible times, and like they stoned Stephen, and some of that crowd, no doubt, were later saved. A preacher isn't God's last chance.

And even the Bible isn't. People have burned the Bible and yet God has saved them. That isn't God's last chance. People have burned down churches and persecuted Christians like Paul did, people who have blasphemed the name of Christ, yet that is not God's last chance. But let me tell you, when the Holy Spirit of God talks to you, He is God's last chance to reach a sinner. I can only get to your ears, I can't get to your heart. You will hear my words but they may go through your ears and never make an impression, and you won't get out of that door until you have forgotten anything of importance I ever said. Only the Holy Spirit can get the message to your heart. When the Holy Spirit strives with you, do not offend Him. Now what I say you may neglect, but if you don't listen to the Spirit of God, if you close the door and insult Him and do despite to Him, and finally blaspheme and drive Him away; if you do, you will never be saved. God has no way in the world to save sinners who drive away the Holy Spirit. "My Spirit will not always strive with man." Don't drive away the Holy Spirit. If He is insulted and blasphemed so much that He leaves you, you are just as if you were in Hell already, you can never be saved.

I don't know whether you have committed that sin. It is a sin of great enlightenment. It is not the sin of a man who never heard the gospel. But the man who has had a big chance, the man who

says, "My father and mother were Christians," you are the one who is in danger. You have gone to church many times. You know the Bible. You are in more danger, but I warn you now, turn and be saved before it is too late forever. Perhaps somebody here fears you have committed the unpardonable sin. The very fact that you are afraid is a pretty good sign you have not, for the unpardonable sin makes a man not want to be saved. But if there is a person here, if there is sweet calling, if there is an insistent pressure of the Spirit of God on your heart, if He is pleading now with you in your heart, then you had better turn and be saved. God is calling. The Holy Spirit of God knocks at the door today and He wants to come in and change your heart and make you a child of God.

Conclusion

I come now to the close of two weeks and three days of revival services, and there is just one more service this afternoon. I wish I had more time. There are people here today who are concerned and they ought to come out openly and boldly for the Lord and make sure and claim Him definitely and say, "I will not resist the Spirit. I will not insult Him. I will not drive Him away." Today, unsaved man, I would say, unsaved man, woman, boy or girl here today, "Now I will trust the Saviour. I will claim Him as my own and have it settled forever that the Holy Spirit comes into my body today, be the temple of the Holy Ghost, be a child of God." Will you do it today?

These are some sins against the Spirit of God, and what wicked sins they are! Sinners, you may sin against man — here is a man that gets drunk and beats his wife and abuses his children, his is not the greatest sin. Here is a man that has murdered some man. Here is a man that seduces a girl and leads her into sin and ruins her life, that is not the greatest sin. The greatest sin isn't on the outside, it is inside. It isn't against man, it is against God. The greatest sin is against the Holy Spirit of God. Let every Christian say, "I will not grieve Him, I will not quench Him," and let every lost sinner say, "I will not resist Him, I will not insult Him, I will not drive Him away, but today I will receive Him. Holy Spirit of God, teach me to trust Christ to be mine and to live in my body that I may be born of the Spirit of God." I would surrender today to the sweet striving of the Holy Spirit and go away saved and happy.

I wonder how many Christian people know the things in your lives that grieve Him, and you say, God has shown me today some sin that grieves the Holy Spirit. Do you say, "I don't think it matters"? Maybe it wouldn't if your body were not the temple of the Holy Spirit, but if the Spirit of God is grieved every day about that sin it is a horrible sin.

God bless you, I would have a session with Him and ask Him to give me grace never again to grieve Him. God grant that we may today give ourselves more wholly to His blessed leading. He has been trying to lead you and guide you and tell you what to do, and you have been rebellious and have had alibis and excuses and arguments and have poured cold water on everything the Spirit of God planned in your life. You have been fighting back at the Spirit who has led you, and you said, "I cannot do this," when He said do it. He has led you to witness for Jesus, but you wouldn't do it. You have fought back and resisted and Christians here have quenched the plan of God in your life and have poured cold water on the Holy Spirit's leadership. You have felt guilty all these days of revival services! God help you to confess it and let the Lord have His way. Say, "In my life I will not resist You any more." Make God's will your life-long plan. Now and then won't do, you have to go further than that to live in the joy of conscious Holy Spirit leading and victory.

How many here are born-again Christians, and you say, "If I know my mind, I am a child of God." Let's see your hands. You have trusted Jesus as your own, and you believe you are saved. Your sins are forgiven, and you believe you are God's child. (Many hold hands.)

Some of you can't say that;

Burdens As Blessings

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

stronger by the grace of God undergird another brother who is weaker.

What a blessing that we live in a social network that constantly calls forth our love in sympathetic helpfulness. If each were strong and self-sufficient, how hard and unaffectionate would life's contacts become.

3. God's "gift." The wording in Psalm 55:22 has quite a different meaning. Here "burden" literally means "gift." What it really says is this: "Cast back upon the Lord what he has given you."

(1) A gift is the expression of love. Such, then, is the inwardness of what we call a burden, judged only by its outwardness.

(2) We are bidden to give it back to Him.

(3) The promise — the blessing of the burden — then appears, "He shall sustain thee."

God in love gives us burdens to serve as a bond between Himself and us. It is this intent of burdens in which we are especially interested in the present study.

II. How burdens become blessings.

We can hear our heavenly Father (CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR)

don't you want to? Must the harvest be past and your soul lost? Must this blessed time when we have had fifty or sixty conversions with many being blessed, pass by, and must you be left behind? I hope not. I wonder how many unsaved people here, and you say, "I have resisted the Spirit of God when He called me. I have said, 'Not now,' when 'the Holy Ghost saith today.' You said not now. You have resisted the Spirit of God, sometimes have even insulted the Spirit of God. You are in danger of driving Him away and being lost already while yet alive by committing the unpardonable sin, never to have any forgiveness in this world or in the world to come. Don't you want to be saved? Then trust Christ today and take Him as your own Saviour."

God is looking for a man, or woman, whose heart will be always set on Him, and who will trust Him for all He desires to do. God is eager to work more mightily now than He ever has through any soul. The clock of the centuries points to the eleventh hour.

"The world is waiting yet to see what God can do through a consecrated soul." Not the world alone, but God Himself is waiting for one, who will be more fully devoted to Him than any who have ever lived; who will be willing to be nothing that Christ may be all; who will grasp God's own purposes; and taking His humility and His faith, His love and His power, will, without hindering, continue to let God do exploits. — C. H. P.

"There is no limit to what God can do with a man, providing he will not touch the glory."

In an address given to ministers and workers after his ninetieth birthday, George Mueller spoke thus of himself: "I was converted in November, 1825, but I only came into the full surrender of the heart four years later, in July, 1829. The love of money was gone, the love of place was gone, the love of position was gone, the love of worldly pleasures and engagements was gone. God, God alone became my portion. I found my all in Him; I wanted nothing else. And by the grace of God this has remained, and has made me a happy man, an exceedingly happy man, and it led me to care only about the things of God. I ask affectionately, my beloved brethren, have you fully surrendered the heart to God, or is there this thing or that thing which you are taken up irrespective of God? I read a little of the Scriptures before, but preferred other books; but since that time the revelation He has made of Himself has become unspeakably blessed to me, and I can say from my heart, God is an infinitely lovely Being. Oh, be not satisfied until in your own inmost soul you can say, God is an infinitely lovely Being!" — Selected.

I pray to God this day to make me an extraordinary Christian.

— Whitfield.
(From "Streams in the Desert," published by The Oriental Missionary Society. Cloth binding, \$1.50. Order from The Sword Book Room, 518 West Franklin, Wheaton, Ill.)

Rest For the Weary

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

as though that could satisfy. The most unhappy people in the world today are the rich. You count the number of suicides in the last ten years and practically one hundred per cent of them have been men of wealth, which proves that gold can never satisfy.

Look at the rulers of Russia. They have stolen the resources of the nation, made slaves of the people. Are they satisfied? Look at the International bandits and gangsters of Europe today. They are fighting, but what for? For the wealth of the world. If they got it, they would all cut each others' throat. Gold can never satisfy.

We seek after shorter working hours and higher wages and better homes. We should have them. I remember as a boy we were very poor. We had only two rooms in our home, and only one was plastered. And it gets pretty cold in Pennsylvania. I remember getting up out of bed one morning and we had to shake the snow off the cover. We had to cut the wood for our fire. And I can look down now and see the shoes I used to have. I always had more sticking out of them than I had in them! If the parents today allowed their children to go now as we used to when I was a boy, they would get arrested for cruelty. At Christmas time we would get hickory nuts, walnuts and popcorn. We would string the popcorn and color it. Mother would make cookies that would stand up. At Christmas eve I would hang up my stocking. I would tie it up at one end. I had a hole at both ends so I could get in at either end easily. In the morning we would get up bright and early and the stocking would be filled with hickory nuts, and chestnuts, walnuts, etc. There would be a letter from Santa Claus, saying that he had to take some hickory nuts, chestnuts, walnuts to some other poor children down the road. We didn't think there was any one in the world any poorer than we were. Now look at Christmas. Bless your heart, Mrs. Shannon and I start down the street, going to Woolworth and we almost buy the store out for our grandchildren. You know how grandpas and grandmothers are. And we take these things we bought to them. Are they any happier than we were, with our hickory nuts, walnuts, popcorn and cookies? No, friends, they are not one bit happier. I say to you today that with all the modern conveniences and improvements, our homes are not as happy as they were in those days of hardship. Am I yearning to go back to those days? I am not, but I am sincerely trying to show you that mere things can never satisfy the yearning of the human heart. God has planted eternity in your soul and you can never be satisfied with anything other than the eternal God in your own heart. Jesus said with stretched-out hands, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and you will never have rest until you find rest in Jesus Christ, for Christ is God.

He gives rest from the guilt of sin. Isn't it worth something, friends, when you go to bed at night and before you sleep, you can say, "I know everything is right between me and my Maker, and if I never wake up here, I will wake up in Heaven. I know the sin question is settled. Christ settled it, and there is nothing between me and God. All is all right and all is well." That is worth something, worth more than all the wealth of the world.

Not only that but He gives rest from the power of sin. Not only does He save from the guilt and from the power, but He sets you free so sin cannot have dominion over you. Bless God, when Christ saves you He keeps you saved. He saves you from the enemy.

I remember in the olden times after my conversion, I still had some of the temptations. The old sins would worry me a great deal. And I used to do a lot of praying and yet it was a tremendous battle until one day I turned to the 6th chapter of Romans and I found that Jesus had fought the battle that I was trying to fight. He won it and set me free from the dominion of sin. I said, "Shannon, how foolish. Why not live in that

freedom which Jesus has already made possible? He won the victory for you. Why not live in that victory?"

Some people tell us that every day we are growing better and better, but every day, my friends, when I awake I have to say, "Lord Jesus, I thank Thee that sin shall not have dominion over me today." Have you said that, my friend, and know it is true?

I shall never forget one time when I was over at the Moody Bible Institute. I went one night over to the mission and they were having a testimony meeting. Everybody was popping up and giving testimonies. I was afraid to get up and I was afraid not to. So finally I got up and said, "I am trying in my weak way to serve the Lord. Pray for me." And then I will never forget that superintendent as he stepped out in front and looked me in the eye and said, "Hey, mister, when you quit trying in your weak way and let God have His way, it will not be weak." That was the greatest sermon I ever heard. "When you quit trying in your weak way and let God have His way, it will not be weak"—in other words, let go and let God. Christ has set you free from sin and it shall not have dominion over you. Why not live in that freedom?

And then He gives rest in time of sickness and sorrow and in death. I tell you, folk, I don't care who you are, whether you are out there in radioland or in the theater, you may have the wealth of the world, you may be worth millions, you may wield great power, but the day is coming when there is only One in the universe who can help you and that One is God. That time comes to every last one of you.

I heard a preacher down south tell some time ago about a man who came to him and said, "Doctor, come on, get in my car. My little girl is dying. You must pray God to spare this child." And this preacher said, "No, I will not pray that, but I will pray that if it is God's will, that He will spare the child." And the man replied, "If that child dies, it will kill my wife. She is a frail, sickly woman and she will never be able to stand it," but the preacher said, "Yes, sir. She has One that will never fail her and He will sustain her in that hour of trial if the dear girl should go."

They went to the home and to the room where lay a little one whose life was fast going out. The husband said, "I can't stand it," and so he rushed out and went behind the house. The preacher remained with the wife, and in a short while the little life had gone. The husband, mad with grief behind the house, cried out, "My God, she is gone. It will kill my wife," and out there beside that husband the preacher said, "No, it will not kill her. She has a Friend that you don't have." They came in directly and through an open door saw the mother kneeling beside the dead body and she was thanking God for the little life. Even though she had been privileged to have it only four years. She promised God she would be a better mother and a better woman. It was better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all. They went in and this dear woman got up off her knees, and smiling between tears, she reached out her long arms and put her hands on the shoulder of her husband and said, "My heart is heavy for you. Heaven has come down to comfort me but I know you don't have that comfort." Then that strong man turned to the preacher and said, "If Jesus Christ can do that for my frail wife, I want you to tell Him I will trust Him," and they got down on their knees together and the same comfort and hope and blessing that came to the heart of that stricken mother, came to that father when he let Jesus come into his life.

Perhaps there is a weary one here. Out there in radioland, is there a heavy heart, a heart crushing under the battle? Have overwhelming shadows crossed your pathway? Then, weary, troubled one, hear these words of Jesus, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, that each one of you this noon would make the confession to Christ, "Thou art all I want, more than all in Thee I find." Wouldn't you like to have a Saviour like Jesus?

Burdens As Blessings

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE)

ther say, "This thing is from me" (1 Kings 12:24). He knows far better than His children what is best for them, and uses each burden He gives to bring some blessing.

1. By binding us to the Lord, teaching us our dependence upon Him — His sufficiency for our insufficiency. For instance, Paul's infirmity of a thorn in the flesh. The Lord could easily have removed it, but had He done so He would have robbed His servant of one of the chief channels of blessing and strengthening. Therefore in love the Lord persisted in holding the thorn in Paul's life to serve as the conveyor of His grace. Each renewed request brought the answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Now we need to note carefully and prayerfully, lest we miss like blessing in our own circumstances, the tribute the apostle pays to the benefits and blessings accruing from this bond of dependence upon the Lord. This is his comment: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Cor. 12:9, 10).

2. By imparting to us a personal knowledge and experience of the Lord. Just as sin gave occasion for an expression of His love, grace, and power never otherwise to be had, so burdens give us opportunity for an experience of His personal concern and care we could not otherwise know.

For instance, added to Paul's experience above, take the sickness of the Syrophenician woman's daughter. The sickness brought this woman low before the Lord in her desire, even at His very feet. What a lesson of humility she learned! And it brought the Lord very sweetly into her life. Her ears never ceased to ring with His words, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt. 15:28). And wherever she and her daughter went, they would never lose the impress of their experience of the Lord.

Or consider the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5). It had been going on for twelve years till it had scarred her life with the sense of permanent disability. There was no help. She would never be any different. Then one day the Lord came across her path. With no burden in her life to be lifted, it would have been but a casual passing, as shallow as the experience of the many who have no burden to bind them to Him. But what a thrill was hers when at her touch, virtue from the Lord came into her needy body.

Or the blessing of the perplexed pathway, causing the child of God to claim the promise, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him: and He shall bring it to pass" (Psa. 37:5). Instead of our worrying, He is working; then the ecstasy when He does bring it to pass.

3. By giving us the joy of doing things for Him. If He never asked a special service of us, if He never required us to attempt the heroic in His name, how cold and careless we would become! But when He lays the burden of some task upon us, our love for Him is quickened and our devotion renewed.

Many instances of a personal nature come to mind. We did not understand His purposes at the time, but in His "afterward" we see the wisdom of His ways with us. He was warming our love to Him. Like the little girl carrying a baby along the street. One said to her, "Is not that baby too heavy for you?" "Oh, no!" she replied, "he's not too heavy; he's my brother." He pours in His love, and love lightens the load.

Down in the hold of the great ship is the engineer. He cannot see where he is going. That is not his part. It is his to faithfully answer the bell, forward, backward, stopping or changing speed. So with us. There is One who knows, and we are working with Him; nay, He is working out His will through us. Our part is faith and faithfulness.

By

JOHN R. RICE

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